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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH : Chairman, National Intelligence Council
Vice Chairmen, National Intelligence Council

FROM : Fritz W. Ermarth
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SUBJECT : Soviet Compliance with Arms Control

1. The immediacy of next week's NSC meeting on arms control compliance prompts me to send you these views before I've really gotten fully into the stream of things. Several conversations with people at NSC staff and State suggest that the following ideas may be useful to you.

Soviet Attitudes

2. The fundamental issues here, both as regards what the Soviets are doing, and what we do about it, are political. The Soviets engage in non-compliant arms control behavior -- be it evading, bending, or outright violation of provisions, as appears to have been the case with "yellow rain" -- for a variety of reasons. They may genuinely wish to have the specific military capabilities that an agreement may deny them. They may wish to probe our verification capabilities, knowing that we shall divulge a great deal of what we see when arms control compliance is debated. They may wish to test our political resolve in designing a reaction.

3. Underlying all these motives is Soviet pursuit of the "politics of the double standard." In arms control, as in other areas of Soviet engagement with the world -- propaganda, terrorism, support for insurgencies -- the Soviets deliberately and persistently seek to get the world to accept

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that the USSR does not and need not live by the rules that bind others. The USSR may in fact violate the rules which the USSR insists other live by, and others must tolerate this without political retribution because of the overriding importance of peace, detente, "meaningful dialogue" with the USSR, etc.

4. It is this motive that unifies the highly varied assortment of non-compliant arms control behavior the Soviets have engaged in. That we cannot get a clean case for violation in each instance is really quite beside the point. The ambiguity in what the Soviets are doing, and what they say to us about it (which ranges from plausible explanation to near contempt for our intelligence) are helpful in encouraging tolerance for Soviet misbehavior; blatant violations alone would not be.

US Responses

5. I've given thoughts along these lines (attached) to who will work them into the appropriate papers. On the policy question of what we do about all this, the attached goes only so far as to say that Soviet political motives make our political response terribly important. Having reached this judgment one bears a certain burden of suggesting what policy responses make sense. The Soviets would prefer us not to make a public issue at all of their non-compliance. This would represent tolerance to the point of complicity with their actions. The next best thing from their point of view, however, is for us to make a major public issue of their misbehavior and then not choose or be able to do anything significant about it.

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6. But what can we, realistically do? The policy options paper which Doug sent you illustrates how difficult it is to come up with any significant response. The Administration clearly does not wish to back away from arms control as a principle, which would be like repudiating the idea of law because there are criminals. The military content of Soviet non-compliance is not so important as to require major changes in our already well-hedged military programs (according to JCS). Everyone agrees that Soviet behavior contributes to verification problems that are getting steadily more difficult anyway because of the nature of evolving military technology, and therefore more intelligence-verification resources are needed. These parameters confine, but do not define a political response.

7. The current US position is much helped by the fact that the Soviets have themselves already walked away from the major arms control negotiating tables. The US doesn't have to make a tricky political decision to stay in negotiations despite evidence of Soviet non-compliance. Moreover, the Soviets are on the political defensive in a many foreign policy areas, and the credibility of the current US administration as being determined to compete effectively with the Soviets is fairly assured. The US can, as a

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result, afford to take a moderate, low key position on the compliance issues without appearing too passive or seeming to encourage tolerance for Soviet misbehavior. The policy that makes most sense to me would be along the following lines:

a. Use the compliance issue to educate Congress, the public, and allies to the view that arms control, while useful and important, cannot be the centerpiece of US-Soviet relations in the future, or the cornerstone of our efforts to keep the peace. Those efforts depend far and away the most on a healthy military balance, which we must unilaterally maintain, and on the credibility in all eyes of our commitments to allies and regional security interests. The content of the US-Soviet dialogue (e.g., at Stockholm) must stress the latter issues rather than arms control.

b. Continue to press the Soviets in the SCC for explanations on the specific compliance issues, treating nonsensical explanations with the same contempt that they manifest toward us. Use this pressure to keep the Soviets on the defensive about arms control in general. They are trying to get US and European publics to accept the notion that they are the aggrieved party, that we destroyed the basis for arms control negotiations and bear the burden of getting them back to the table. Sober airing of the compliance issues will help reinforce the case that the deadlock on arms control is really their fault and will require a change of policy on their part to break. (The Soviets made a major tactical blunder in walking out of all the talks, I believe, and are probably coming to realize this.)

c. Use the whole package of compliance problems to make the case that the USSR is not just another superpower with an inconveniently paranoid outlook, but a relentless adversary who sees even potentially cooperative forms of engagement with us, such as arms control, as weapons in a long-term strategic competition, a competition which we also must effectively wage if we are to keep the peace and prevent the expansion of Soviet hegemonies.

8. The political thrust of the foregoing is clearly not to change Soviet arms control compliance behavior, which it won't and can't. It is rather to use the compliance issue to create a more sober political environment in the West on arms control and to reduce the pressures on the US to make substantive or tactical concessions just to get the Soviets back to the table.

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9. At the same time the NSC will want to define some outcome from the review of Soviet compliance that is positive for arms control itself, beyond the lesson that we should be tough minded. I am, so far, not familiar enough with current US positions or the recent record at the SCC in Geneva to make solid suggestions here. Proposals calling for increased data exchange on systems in development and deployment have some merit. More important, however, will be rigorous reexamination of all current proposals for verifiability.

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Attachment: Soviet Attitudes on Compliance

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Soviet Attitudes on Compliance

Soviet attitudes and policies on arms control compliance are derivative of larger Soviet strategies for waging competition with the United States. Arms control in general is but one of their means of strategic and political struggle. The Soviets may pursue specific programmatic or technical objectives with respect to a specific compliance issue, e.g., encryption or ABM radars. Such objectives may precede, or emerge subsequent to, Soviet acceptance of a specific arms control constraint.

Beyond this, however, the Soviets tailor their compliance behavior to pursue a broader strategic objective: to cultivate an environment in which the USSR enjoys maximum freedom to evade, stretch, test, or where necessary, directly violate agreed constraints with the tacit acquiescence of other parties, and without suffering political consequences. In other words, they behave with respect to compliance to get the world to accept that the USSR does not and need not play by the same rules as others are held to. Arms control compliance is not the only area of Soviet policy where this policy is pursued; nor does this policy dictate cavalier disregard for prudence in handling compliance issues. It does, however, give the Soviets an incentive to act in ways we find injurious to sound compliance apart from specific weapons or technical goals they may have. And it creates a situation in which what the US chooses to do about Soviet noncompliance is more important to Soviet leaders than whether or not we detect it and how we classify it.

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The Soviets pulling away from the arms talks, their conduct in non-compliance and the public airing of this issue, their new threatening activity in weapons based on advances in biotechnologies, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] --all this calls for and presents an opportunity for a new approach to arms control.

The non-compliance issues now on the table are not new. All were launched in the 70s, most of them in the late 70s, along with the Afghan invasion, at a time when SALT II had been negotiated and they thought it would be ratified. Thus, they were not provoked by recalcitrant US attitudes. More likely they were encouraged by a perception of US softness which made them think they could sell the X-25 missile and the Siberian radar as not violating any agreement and that the US would swallow it.

Their present reaction can be attributed to recognition that they can't play fast and loose with this President and resulting frustration. We believe they have now decided to tough it out throughout this year, hoping that, if they can't roll the President, they can, through real and implied threats, impact the US election and roll the West Europeans, although their attempt in 1983 failed. But they can still hope for better luck in 1985 and have little to lose in trying.

Despite all the Soviet talk about peace and a desire to limit arms, the Soviets are crashing along with the largest number ever of new weapons in development, laying a basis for missile defense, setting up closed biological institutes to develop new and more threatening bacteriological and chemical weapons.

Facing this, we should not lose the opportunity to use the Soviet violation record to develop understanding and acceptance for offsetting the enhanced Soviet new and more threatening missiles by developing greater protection for

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our deterrent and our people with missile defense and a new and more promising negotiating stance for renewed arms control effort.

On protecting our people and our deterrent, the violation issue reaffirms the need for MX, Trident, Pershings and GLCMs until the Soviets reduce or limit their arsenal. It can also get across that we cannot sit still while the Soviets continue to put substantial elements of missile defense in place.

The arms control process is not working. We lost more than a decade trying to get a followup to SALT I. As weapons systems have become more advanced, the ability to monitor has declined, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED], agreements negotiated have become too technical to be workable or to get public understanding.

The violations could be related to the missile defense initiative to support security and arms control needs. Establishing missile defense around the MX deployment can be done without abrogating the ABM Treaty. This would say that no matter how many big missiles the Soviets build, they cannot expect to take away the MX or Trident. This could be the basis for a negotiating stance where the argument for arms reduction is: (a) our missile defense will reduce the value of your existing missile arsenal, (b) you can reduce the threat to both of us by agreeing to mutual reductions of offensive missiles and (c) we can both save resources and become safer by agreeing to this mutual reduction.

While initiating this hopefully more effective negotiating line, we could also offer a series of new and simple agreements which could avoid the pitfalls of the elusive comprehensive agreement, be more quickly arrived at, less technical, in some cases easier to monitor and to verify. We could recognize at this stage that limiting throw weight is a dead end because it would require the Soviets to fundamentally alter their force structure and they won't buy it. As long as the Soviets continue to add new missiles

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to their present stock of large missiles, there is considerable question as to how important throw weight is. We may have more chance to deter the use of this arsenal by missile defense than to negotiate it away and missile defense can give us a new basis for seeking an agreed reduction. The Soviets are likely to be more open to reducing missile numbers and limitations on missile size, which would buy us some additional security and possibly improve prospects of further progress. Other examples of agreements likely to be more readily negotiable might involve mobile missiles, anti-satellite weapons, and broader restrictions on biological and chemical weapons.

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